

Title: Manhole Device
Serial No. 10/008,601
Filed 11/05/2001
Reply to Office Action of September 8, 2003

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application. Please amend Claims 45 and 53 as indicated in the Listing of Claims.

Listing of Claims

Claims 1 – 44 (cancelled).

45. (Currently Amended) A manhole device for a vessel, comprising:
a flange extending outwardly from the vessel and having an inner periphery defining a manhole;
a closure pivotally and telescopically mounted to the vessel adjacent the flange for releasably and sealably engaging the flange;
at least one wheel rotatably mounted to the closure;
at least one track extending outwardly from the vessel proximate the flange for engaging the at least one wheel as the closure pivots; and,
at least one clamp to releasably engage the closure for contracting the closure into sealable engagement with the flange.

46. (Previously presented) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 45, further comprising a handle extending outwardly from the closure for assisting an operator in pivoting the closure.

47. (Previously presented) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 45, wherein two wheels are oppositely and rotatably mounted to the closure, and two spaced-apart tracks are disposed on the vessel to respectively engage the wheels, whereby binding of the closure is reduced as the closure rises above the flange.

48. (Previously presented) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 45, wherein the at least one clamp comprises:

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the closure having at least one slot;
at least one threaded bolt pivotally mounted to the vessel and removably
extending through the at least one slot; and,
a matingly threaded nut adjustably engaging the bolt, whereby as the nut moves
toward the closure, the nut exerts pressure against the closure to releasably seal the closure to the
flange.

Claims 49 – 52 (cancelled).

53. (Currently Amended) A manhole device for a vessel having a manhole,
comprising:
a closure pivotally and telescopically mounted to the vessel adjacent the manhole
for releasably enclosing the manhole;
at least one wheel rotatably mounted to the closure;
at least one track extending outwardly from the vessel proximate the manhole for
engaging the at least one wheel, whereby as the at least one wheel engages and rises along the at
least one tract as the closure pivots, the closure rises above the manhole.

54. (Previously presented) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 53,
further comprising at least one clamp to releasably engage the closure for contracting the closure
into sealable engagement with the manhole.

55. (Previously presented) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 53,
further comprising a handle extending outwardly from the closure for assisting an operator in
pivoting the closure.

56. (Previously presented) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 53,
wherein two wheels are rotatably mounted to the closure, and two spaced-apart tracks are
disposed on the vessel to respectively engage the wheels as the closure pivots.

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57. (Previously presented) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 53,
wherein the at least one clamp comprises:

the closure having at least one slot;

at least one threaded bolt pivotally mounted to the vessel and removably
extending through the at least one slot; and,

a matingly threaded nut adjustably engaging the bolt to releasably exert pressure
against the closure and releasably enclose the manhole with the closure.